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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN (J. MUDGE, M. O'MARA), S/CT (D. FRANZ)

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: RUSSIANS HOST CTAG MEETING

11. (SBU) Summary: During the first CTAG of the Russian G-8 presidency, representatives of G-8 embassies discussed the threats to Kazakhstan posed by international terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking. While expressing general satisfaction with the GOK's approach to counterterrorism issues, participants noted certain deficiencies with regard to domestic legislation and operational cooperation. The existence of terrorist groups with links to international networks was also noted. All participants concurred that the situation in Afghanistan was the most important external factor in regional stability. The Russian ambassador stated that the GOR has proposed the creation of an anti-narcotics security zone around Afghanistan. End summary.

12. (U) In their capacity as president of the G-8 for 2006, the Russians hosted a meeting of the Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) in Almaty on February 1. The U.S. and UK ambassadors and representatives of the Canadian, German, French, and Japanese embassies attended. The Italians were unable to participate as their Embassy has moved to Astana.

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Russian Presentation  
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13. (SBU) Russian Ambassador Vladimir Babichev opened the discussion with general remarks regarding the importance of the CTAG process and Kazakhstan's counterterrorism record. Babichev indicated that the GOR would host a "larger" CTAG in Moscow in February to discuss the results of regional meetings, and proposed a draft protocol for participants' approval (see para. 12). He stated that representatives of the GOK would be invited to future CTAG meetings in Kazakhstan.

14. (SBU) Babichev cited international terrorism, organized crime, and narcotrafficking as threats requiring broad international cooperation to address. He underscored the importance of coalitions between "state and society." Babichev cited Afghanistan as the prime external factor impacting Kazakhstan's security. Conceding that the threat had decreased following international intervention and elections, Babichev underscored continuing problems among ethnic groups and the slowness of economic development. He asserted that the Karzai government had not yet attained "the level of national concord and restoration of the country that took place during the government of President Nadzhibully." He noted the continuing threat from extremist forces based in Pakistan, including UBL, and called for "equal interaction on the basis of transparency" between CSTO and NATO to address the threats. Babichev referred to

increasing narcotics flows from Afghanistan, noting both transit and consumption in Afghanistan. He said the GOR favors the creation of an "anti-narcotics security zone" around Afghanistan.

15. (SBU) With regard to internal factors, Babichev highlighted the stable political situation, including the "triumphal results" of the December presidential elections. He stated that effective political and economic policies, as well as religious and ethnic harmony, had hindered the growth of extremism. Babichev highlighted the GOK's efforts to combat terrorism, religious extremism, and drug trafficking, as well as legislation such as the 1999 terrorism law and the banning of Hizb'ut Tahrir. He noted the establishment of the interagency antiterrorist center and the fact that the UNSC held a meeting of the Counterterrorism Committee in Almaty in January 2005. Babichev also mentioned the discovery of the al Qaida-affiliated "Jamat Mojaheds of Central Asia" terrorist group in Kazakhstan. The GOK has offered to host CARICC as part of the UN anti-drug program.

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Reactions  
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16. (SBU) Ambassador Ordway, asked to give the first reaction, said that the U.S. agreed with the overall analysis of the situation in Kazakhstan. We are satisfied with the degree of the GOK's commitment to fighting terrorism. Ordway gave an overview of U.S. CT assistance to Kazakhstan and noted that the GOK's awareness and cooperation had increased markedly in the wake of the July 2004 Tashkent bombings. He proposed that the draft protocol

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reflect the existence of terrorist groups with links to international networks. Ambassador Babichev indicated that he supported such an addition.

17. (SBU) UK Ambassador Paul Brummell highlighted the ongoing London Compact meeting on Afghanistan, where FM Tokayev was representing Kazakhstan. He noted that HMG is taking the proposal of an anti-narcotics security zone very seriously, and was working with the countries bordering Afghanistan on a declaration of good neighborly relations. The UK welcomes the GOK's interest in hosting CARICC. Brummell noted that there was work to be done on implementing the UN CTC's recommendations regarding the Kazakhstani legislative framework.

18. (SBU) French DCM Dominique Gentil and police attache Jean-Luc Debout expressed dissatisfaction with the level of concrete counterterrorism cooperation from the GOK. Debout noted that France welcomed the GOK's interest in CARICC. The GOK believes that existing legislation did not adequately address terrorist financing. He noted the existence of political will to take action against terrorism at the regional level, however. He called for more operational cooperation rather than just agreements.

19. (SBU) German DCM Joachim von Marschall highlighted the potential for terrorist activities in the surrounding countries surrounding and the existence of terrorist groups "sleeping" in Kazakhstan. He noted that rapid economic development in Kazakhstan could bring certain societal changes which terrorist or extremist groups oppose, placing the country "on the radar screen." He seconded the previously-expressed views that Kazakhstan's CT legislation needs work, particularly with reference to implementing UNSCR 1373 and 1624. He called on G-8 countries to offer assistance in that regard.

110. (SBU) Canadian First Secretary Mark Ogenorth seconded the addition proposed by the U.S. to the protocol. The Canadian government shared the analysis that Afghanistan

presented the greatest threat to regional stability; for that reason, he explained, the GOC has focused its CT activities to date on Afghanistan. Opgenorth noted that CT assistance funding had recently been increased and might become available for Central Asia.

¶11. (SBU) Japanese DCM Kiesi Matsuzaki noted that Japan also sees Afghanistan as crucial to the stability of Central Asia, and had provided significant assistance. He commented that it might be useful to invite Kazakhstani counterterrorism specialists to Japan for consultations.

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Protocol  
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¶12. (SBU) Text of the protocol to be shared with G-8 capitals (Russian Embassy unofficial translation):

On the 1st of February 2006 Ambassadors and representatives of the embassies of G-8 states held a working meeting of a "local" Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) on CT activities that are carried on in Kazakhstan and also exchanged opinions on probable requirements of Kazakhstan in gaining corresponding CT assistance.

The discussion showed a wide range for CT cooperation in the framework of G-8 CTAG in Central Asia.

During the meeting it was stated that Kazakh authorities purposefully and consistently fulfill the complex of antiterrorist measures closely coordinating bilaterally and multilaterally its efforts with international organizations and independent states. But for all that an opinion that Kazakh government confidently ensures economic, social, and political stability in the country was expressed. Thereupon it seems that within the next two or three years there is no place for terror threat aggravation in Kazakhstan.

[U.S. addition: Participants noted the activity in Kazakhstan of certain terrorist groups with links to international networks and agreed that continued domestic vigilance was necessary.] At the same time during the meeting it was noticed that primary terrorist hazards for Kazakhstan are provoked by the external factors, closely related with an unstable situation in Afghanistan.

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Taking this into consideration, there is still some need in Kazakhstan in receiving information on other states and international organizations CT experience, as well as methodical assistance (which includes cutting of terrorism financing channels as well), and unified technical instruments for guarding and control. Ideological confrontation to terrorism and extremist ideology in Kazakhstan gained in special importance.

In the mean time it was stated, that Kazakhstan progress in CT policy obviously deserves attention and Kazakhstan experience could be useful for other countries.

It was underlined, that such strategically important region for Europe as Central Asia should not fall out of touch with CT Committee of the UN Security Council. In order to strengthen the cooperation between CT Committee and CTAG it seems advisable to put Kazakhstan on the list of visits of CT Committee for 2006.

Kazakhstan's needs and plans of partners of CTAG shall be further examined during an additional meeting of G-8 embassy representatives in Kazakhstan in the first half of 2006.

ORDWAY